

Employment, Independence & Equality











Consumer Information Handbook

Dates to Remember
Important Contacts

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Mission

The California Department of Rehabilitation works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities.

Our Core Values

The values under which we operate all of our programs and services.

Quality

Strive to meet stakeholders' needs through continuous improvement, competence, creativity, and teamwork.

Respect

Be sensitive to the diverse needs of others, both internal and external stakeholders, by being courteous, compassionate, responsive, and professional.

Integrity

In all endeavors, act in an ethical, honest, and professional manner.

Openness

Be willing to listen to and share information with others. Be flexible, inclusive, trusting, and receptive to new ideas.

Accountability

Take ownership and responsibility for actions and their results.

Our Guiding Principles

The principles that guide us in our daily work.

- Delivering effective vocational rehabilitation services, and other programs and services in an efficient, caring, professional, and prompt manner.
- 2. Attracting, developing, and retaining a competent, creative, and highly motivated workforce.

- 3. Maintaining public trust by being fiscally responsible and ensuring quality programs and services.
- 4. Sustaining our role as a respected leader in the disability community; inspiring hope in those we serve.

Introduction

If you have a disability and you need vocational rehabilitation services, the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) may be able to help you find work and become independent. This booklet will be your guide to DOR services.

As a DOR consumer, you and your counselor will develop your vocational rehabilitation program, which includes your employment goal and the services you will need to reach your goal. You are the most important person in this process.

If you cannot find answers to your questions in this booklet, please contact the local DOR office in your area. Phone numbers and addresses of the DOR district offices are located on pages 44-48.

Purpose

The Department of Rehabilitation's vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, projects, and activities shall be carried out in a manner consistent with the following principles: respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of independent living and meaningful careers, based on informed choice of individuals with disabilities. (Welf. & Inst. Code Sec. 19000(e)(1))

Informed choice means the provision of activities whereby individuals with disabilities served by projects under this part have the opportunity to be active, full partners in the rehabilitation process, making meaningful and informed choices as follows:

- (a) During assessments of eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs.
- (b) In the selection of employment outcomes, services needed to achieve

the outcomes, entities providing these services, and the methods used to secure these services. (34 C.F.R. Sec. 361.52; see also 29 U.S.C. Sec. 722(b)(2)(B))

Who Should Apply?

- □Do you have a disability?
- □Do you want to work?
- □ Are you having trouble getting or keeping a job because of your disability?
- □Do you believe vocational rehabilitation services, such as job placement, training, or other job preparation would help you get or keep a job?

If you answered "yes" to all these questions, you may qualify for DOR services. To learn more, contact your local DOR office.

Referral to Other Agencies

The DOR also provides information and referral services to persons who do not wish to apply for services but request or need referral to another agency or program such as:

- 1) Schedule "A" Appointment One form of federal assistance available to persons with disabilities applying for federal jobs. Schedule "A" appointments require a certification letter from a DOR counselor.
- 2) Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) LEAP helps recruit and hire persons with disabilities into state service, in specific state job classifications. Persons who qualify for LEAP can apply for any LEAP-specified examination if minimum qualifications are met. LEAP eligibility and participation require disability certification from a DOR counselor.

To learn more about Schedule "A," LEAP, and referral to another agency or program, please contact your local DOR office.

How to Apply

How to request DOR services:

- Go to the local DOR office in your area and complete an application, or
- Call your local DOR office to request an application form, or ask questions about DOR services, or
- 3. Apply online at www.dor.ca.gov or print an application from the website and mail the completed form to your local DOR office.
- 4. Give the DOR information needed to start the application process. You are considered to have submitted an application when you or your representative, as appropriate:
 - (1) Have applied for or requested services by:
 - a) Completing and signing a DR222, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Application; or
 - b) Completing a common intake application form in One-Stop Center

- requesting vocational rehabilitation services; or
- Otherwise requesting services from the DOR; and
- (2) Have provided the DOR with information necessary to begin an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services; and
- (3) Are available to complete the assessment process.

To determine eligibility within the time required by law, the date of application is the date when all three of the above requirements are met.

After you have submitted an application or have requested services and have provided basic information to the DOR, you will be given an appointment for an interview to begin the assessment process.

Assessment Process

The purpose of the assessment process is to allow you and your counselor to discuss:

- your disability and how it affects your ability to work and
- the types of DOR services you may need to become employed.

Eligibility - You and your counselor will:

- obtain and review medical and other information to determine how your disability affects your ability to work and
- determine how DOR services can help you get or keep a job.

After obtaining enough information, your counselor will determine your eligibility for DOR services.

Priority for Services - You and your counselor will:

- review and discuss information obtained from you and other sources about your disability,
- agree on how it limits you in six general areas of functioning, including: communication, mobility, interpersonal skills, self care, work tolerance and work skills, and based on this assessment,
- determine your disability priority score that represents the significance of your workrelated limitations.

Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment - You and your counselor will discuss:

- your abilities and capabilities and, to the extent necessary,
- relevant assessments to determine the services and assistance you will need to get or keep a job.

You and your counselor will be partners in making informed choices throughout your

vocational rehabilitation program. At your request, the DOR will communicate with you in your primary language and appropriate mode of communication so that you can fully understand the process.

Actively participate - Your vocational rehabilitation program moves more quickly if you stay actively involved with your vocational rehabilitation (VR) team and provide information requested as soon as you can.

How can you help with the assessment process?

- 1. Bring complete information to your first meeting, including:
 - any documents you have about your disability,
 - recent records and benefit letters such as those from the Social Security Administration or your "Ticket" from the federal "Ticket to Work" program,
 - a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors, professionals, and

- organizations you have consulted about your disability, and
- any documentation you have about your disability, such as a copy of your Individual Educational Plan.
- 2. Learn about and understand the vocational rehabilitation process.
 - Read the information we provided you about the program.
 - If you do not understand something you read or something described, ask a member of your VR team to explain it.
- 3. Keep your appointments and be on time.
 - Call your counselor's office if you cannot keep an appointment.
 - Tell your counselor if you move or change your phone number.
- 4. Follow through and complete your part of any actions you and your counselor agree upon.

It's Up To You!

Eligibility

If the DOR receives complete information about your disability, your counselor will notify you in writing of your eligibility within 60 days of receiving your application. If information about your disability is incomplete or delayed, you and your counselor will agree on a specific extension date to determine your eligibility.

If you are receiving Social Security
Administration benefits or if you have a valid
"Ticket to Work," you are presumed eligible for DOR services.

Ticket to Work Hotline

1-866-449-2730 Phone 1-866-359-7705 TTY

To be eligible for services, an individual must:

- have a physical or mental impairment
- that substantially impedes his or her ability to secure employment and

- vocational rehabilitation services are required to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice; further,
- the individual can benefit from the provision of services in terms of an employment outcome in an integrated setting.

If your disability is so severe that you might not be able to benefit from DOR services, you can be provided an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to benefit from DOR services by working in a realistic work setting (a trial work experience). If needed, you may receive appropriate DOR services during the trial work experience.

Receiving Services

Order of Selection - When the DOR does not have enough money to serve all applicants who are eligible for DOR services, the law requires the DOR to use a process called "Order of Selection" to make sure those persons with the most significant disabilities are served first.

Along with your eligibility determination, you will receive a disability priority score called "Priority for Services Determination" that will be used in the Order of Selection process. Giving all applicants a disability priority score and placing them in priority categories is a fair method of serving all applicants in the following order required by law:

- Persons in the "most significantly disabled" category will be served first.
- Persons in the "significantly disabled" category will be served next, and
- Persons in the "disabled category" will be served last.

Within each disability priority category, consumers will be served according to their date of application.

Waiting List - If the DOR does not have enough money to serve applicants in your disability priority category, you will be:

- placed on a waiting list,
- notified annually as to which category is being served,
- notified as soon as funds are available, then served according to your application date.

You will find information about the waiting list notification process on our website, www.dor.ca.gov.

While you are on the waiting list, the DOR will provide you with information and referrals to other services that may be able to help you reach your employment goals until you receive DOR services.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

If you:

- have applied for services,
- completed the assessment process,
- are found eligible for services,
- and placed in a disability priority category being served,

you and your counselor will jointly develop your IPE. The IPE is your written plan listing your job objective and DOR services you will receive to reach your employment goal. You and your counselor will discuss your unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice as you develop your IPE.

- You and your counselor work in partnership in developing your IPE.
- You and your counselor will determine your employment goals.

- You will have the opportunity, within the DOR's regulations, to discuss and choose the specific vocational rehabilitation services, providers, and settings you need to reach your employment goals.
- You and your counselor will discuss the process to get needed services.

IPE Development

Your IPE will include the following:

- Description of your employment goal
- Timeline to reach your employment goal
- Description of the services and service providers you will need
- Timelines for providing each of the included services
- Description of the process to get services
- Description of the criteria to measure your progress
- Responsibilities of your counselor, you, and others involved with your IPE
- Outline of consumer participation in paying for part of the IPE, if applicable
- Identification of comparable services and benefits you may apply for and secure

Your options for developing your IPE include:

Receiving assistance from your VR team

- Receiving assistance from outside resources
- Developing your own IPE

A member of your VR team will:

- Explain the IPE components and the DOR guidelines
- Explain whether you may need to pay for a portion of your services (financial participation)
- Explain your need to use services available from other sources (comparable services and benefits) and other related information
- Help you complete DOR forms
- Explain the Ticket to Work program

Your counselor will review a draft of your IPE to ensure your goals and necessary services meet DOR guidelines.

Identify Your Goals

Employment Services

The DOR will provide the range and duration of services necessary to assist you to secure, retain, or regain employment.

Your IPE must be completed and signed by you, and then approved in writing by your counselor and/or the Rehabilitation Supervisor before you can begin receiving services included in your IPE.

Not all available services are needed by all consumers. The DOR's services include, but are not limited to:

- counseling and guidance
- referrals and assistance to get services from other agencies
- job search and placement assistance
- vocational and other training services
- evaluation of physical and mental impairments
- on-the-job or personal assistance services

- interpreter services
- rehabilitation and orientation/mobility services for individuals who are deaf and/or blind
- occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies
- technical assistance for self-employment
- rehabilitation assistive technology
- supported employment services
- services to the family
- transportation as required, such as travel and related expenses, that is necessary to enable you to participate in a vocational rehabilitation service
- post-employment services
- transition services for students
- expansion of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, which include, but are not limited to, professional employment and self-employment

Consumer Responsibilities

After your IPE has been developed, it is your responsibility to:

- Maintain contact with your counselor and keep all appointments.
- Talk with a member of your VR team if you are having a problem that affects your plan (such as changes in your address, medical, or financial status).
- Discuss any changes that might be needed in your plan.
- Apply for and secure available comparable services and benefits (such as financial aid, grants, or services through non-DOR agencies).
- Participate financially in your plan, if necessary.
- Attend and fully participate in training programs and classes.

- Provide regular progress updates, grades, and attend annual review meetings as required.
- Participate fully in your job search and job placement activities.
- Obtain <u>prior approval</u> from your counselor or the Rehabilitation Supervisor <u>before you</u> <u>purchase</u> any goods and services related to your IPE. A written authorization is required before any services can be provided.
- Reach an agreement with your counselor and sign a written IPE amendment if making a significant change in your plan.
- Communicate and interact with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

Failure to cooperate, failure to make reasonable effort, or failure to maintain ongoing communication or scheduled appointments could result in loss of further services and closure of your case file.

Employment Outcome Maximization

In developing an IPE, the consumer and the DOR will determine the employment outcome desired that is consistent with the consumer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.

The State VR services program is not intended solely to place individuals with disabilities in entry-level jobs but is intended to enable individuals to pursue meaningful careers by securing employment commensurate with their abilities and capabilities. (Welf. and Inst. Code Sec. 19000, subd. (a)(6))

	Future Goals:	
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Employment, Independence & Equality

Counselor Responsibilities

It is your counselor's responsibility to:

- Assist you in exercising informed choice.
- Provide counseling and guidance.
- Keep information confidential, except where the law requires the counselor to share information.
- Inform you of available resources and referrals, as appropriate.
- Advise you of your rights and remedies, including review of DOR decisions, how to request Mediation, Fair Hearing, or file a discrimination complaint.
- Inform you about the Client Assistance Program.
- Assist in coordinating services for your plan.
- Review your progress periodically and complete an Annual Review to continue timely service delivery.

- Reach an agreement with you and provide a written amendment for your signature if there are major changes in your IPE.
- Keep you fully informed throughout your plan, including a full consultation before closing your record of services (case file).
- Communicate and interact with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

Case Closure

Your record of services (case file) may be closed for various reasons.

The best reason is you have been employed successfully for 90 days. At that time, your record of services can be successfully closed.

Other reasons for closing your record of services include:

- You are determined to be ineligible for services.
- You are not available to complete a needed assessment to determine your eligibility or priority for services.
- You cease contact with the DOR and you cannot be located or contacted.
- You decline to accept, participate in, or use DOR services.
- You fail to cooperate in assessments or your IPE.

 You engage in any criminal activity, including fraud, related to your applying for or receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

You can appeal any DOR action or decision, including an action to close your record of services.

Client Assistance Program

If you encounter problems with the services provided by the DOR, you may request assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP). You are encouraged to try to resolve the problem first with your counselor or his/her Rehabilitation Supervisor. A CAP advocate may provide you with information, advice, and representation, including assistance in pursuing legal, administrative, or other appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of your rights, and to help you access appropriate services. You may have assistance from the CAP at any point from the time you apply for services, until after you stop receiving services. It is always your right to bring a family member, representative, or CAP advocate to meet with the DOR staff. CAP advocates are independent advocates and not DOR employees.

If you cannot achieve resolution of your concerns at the local level, CAP may help you request, prepare for, and/or represent you at a

Mediation meeting, an Administrative Review, or advise you on the Fair Hearing process.

Client Assistance Program

Statewide referrals 1-800-952-5544 Phone 1-866-712-1085 TTY

Your local CAP advocate

Review of Decisions

Administrative Review

When your concerns are not resolved through your counselor or the Rehabilitation Supervisor at the local level, you can request an Administrative Review by the District Administrator. Again, CAP can assist you with this request.

Mediation

Mediation is another option for resolving disputes with the DOR. Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, and problem-solving process, assisted by qualified, impartial mediators from outside the DOR.

The goals of mediation are to fully describe both sides of the dispute, explore options for resolving the problem, and reach mutually satisfying solutions.

This service is free to applicants, eligible individuals, and consumers. You are welcome

to bring a representative for support during mediation.

For information on requesting mediation, please contact your counselor, his/her Rehabilitation Supervisor, or District Administrator in your local district office. DOR district office phone numbers are listed on pages 44-48.

Fair Hearing

If you are dissatisfied with any action or decision of the DOR related to your application or to your services, you can request a Fair Hearing within one year of the DOR decision or action. If you are dissatisfied with the decision made as a result of the optional Administrative Review, a written request for a Fair Hearing must be filed with the Department within 30 days of the receipt of the decision. The hearing will be held within 60 days from the date of your request unless you agree to a delay. You may concurrently seek an informal Administrative Review. The decision will be rendered within 15 days of the

date of the request. At the hearing, you may appear in person and may be accompanied by a representative or other advocate of your choice. Many problems can be resolved locally, informally, and more quickly. It may be to your benefit to work through the Administrative Review process first, before requesting a formal Fair Hearing.

For information on requesting a Fair Hearing, you may contact the District Administrator in your local DOR district office. If you are not satisfied with the Fair Hearing decision, you can file a writ of mandate, within six months of the decision with the California Superior Court.

Confidentiality

The Department is committed to keeping any information you provide confidential.

The Information Practices Act of 1977, California Civil Code, Sections 1798 et seq., guarantees you certain rights:

Right to privacy:

Only information about you that is relevant and necessary to carry out the purpose of the Department's program will be collected. The information will be used only in processing your program of services, including resolving consumer complaints or appeals. Some personal information may be shared with the Social Security Administration to verify that you are eligible for services.

· Right to access:

You may request access to any of your records that the DOR maintains. The DOR shall promptly let you or your chosen representative inspect, or shall provide you copies of any document or item of information in the case record.

• Right to request an amendment to your case service record:

You may seek correction of any misinformation in your record by making a request to your counselor. The request should be in writing and as specific as possible. If the Rehabilitation Supervisor does not agree with your amendment to the record, you may request an Administrative Review or Fair Hearing (see page 34-36). If the results of the review or hearing do not agree with your amendment to your record, you may submit a written statement of reasonable length with your views of the disputed information. This statement will be placed in your record of services.

Disclosure

Generally, the DOR cannot release consumer information without receiving authorization from you, the consumer. A consumer must sign an appropriate release form before the DOR can release information to anyone, including information to a family member, unless there is a court order or a law that requires us to disclose. Under special circumstances there are disclosures without written consent, as described in the California Code of Regulations Section 7143.

All persons allowed access to your records are prohibited from redisclosing this information to anyone else without your specific, informed, written consent.

Discrimination

It is the DOR's policy to serve all qualified persons with a disability without discrimination based on their protected status, including:

physical or mental disability, age, sex, color, ethnic group, race, national origin, ancestry, religion, medical condition, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Sometimes the DOR's regulations or policies may not let your counselor approve a service you requested, and your request will be changed or denied. This type of decision is a disagreement, but is not discrimination. However, a disagreement or decision could be discrimination if the reason your counselor disagrees with you or denies your request is based on your race, age, disability, or another protected status noted above.

You have a right to have disagreements with your counselor settled by someone other than your counselor. You have a right to call a Client Assistance Program advocate to help you settle the disagreement (see page 32-33). You also have the right to ask for an Administrative Review, Mediation, and/or Fair Hearing to settle the disagreement (see page 34-36). These processes can settle most disagreements.

If you have information that the disagreement was because of your race, age, disability, or another protected status, you have a right to file a discrimination complaint to settle the problem within 180 days from the date of the discriminatory action.

There are three ways to file a discrimination complaint:

- 1. Contact the District Administrator and ask for an Administrative Review related to discrimination. Explain why you think the disagreement or denial is based on discrimination. Because the District Administrator is located closest to your service delivery, she or he may be able to settle your complaint directly and more quickly than other complaint methods. Your District Administrator can be reached by using the contact information on pages 44-48.
- Contact the DOR's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) if you believe that actions taken and/or

decisions made were because of unlawful discrimination (i.e., related to a protected status: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, genetics, physical or mental disability, sex, or age) rather than on the DOR's policies or regulations. The OCR will send you a discrimination complaint filing form and provide detailed information that you should include within your complaint. Upon receiving and reviewing your complaint, if appropriate, the OCR will conduct an investigation and let you know the outcome. Contact the OCR at:

Department of Rehabilitation Office of Civil Rights 721 Capitol Mall Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 558-5850 Phone (916) 558-5852 TTY

3. Contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (US DOE OCR). Explain your disagreement or denial and

provide information supporting why you think it is based on discrimination. US DOE OCR may investigate your complaint and work with the DOR to resolve as appropriate.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 50 Beale Street, Ste. 7200 San Francisco, CA 94105 (415) 486-5555 Phone (877) 521-2172 TTY

DOR District Offices

Where to Find Information:

www.dor.ca.gov

Northern/Central California

Greater East Bay

1485 Enea Court, Suite 1100 Concord, CA 94520-5228 (925) 602-3953 Phone (925) 689-1798 Fax (925) 676-5623 TTY

Northern Sierra

721 Capitol Mall, Suite 110 Sacramento, CA 95814-4702 (916) 558-5300 Phone (916) 558-5303 Fax (916) 558-5302 TTY

Redwood Empire

50 D Street, Suite 425 Santa Rosa, CA 95404-4764 (707) 576-2233 Phone (707) 576-2239 Fax (707) 576-8212 TTY

San Francisco

301 Howard Street, Suite 700 San Francisco, CA 94105-6604 (415) 904-7100 Phone (415) 904-5996 Fax (415) 904-7100 TTY

San Joaquin Valley

2550 Mariposa Mall, Rm. 2000 P.O. Box 24001 Fresno, CA 93779-9889 (559) 445-6011 Phone (559) 445-6528 Fax (559) 266-3373 TTY

San Jose

100 Paseo de San Antonio, Rm. 324 San Jose, CA 95113-1479 (408) 277-1355 Phone (408) 277-1270 Fax (408) 277-4129 TTY

Santa Barbara

509 E. Montecito Street, Suite 101 Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3216 (805) 560-8130 Phone (805) 560-8162 Fax (805) 560-8167 TTY

DOR District Offices

Southern California

Greater Los Angeles

3333 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 200

Los Angeles, CA 90010-4101

(213) 736-3904 Phone

(213) 736-3949 Fax

(213) 736-3960 TTY

Los Angeles South Bay

4300 Long Beach Blvd, Suite 200

Long Beach, CA 90807-2008

(562) 422-8325 Phone

(562) 864-2776 Fax

(562) 422-9276 TTY

Orange/San Gabriel

222 S. Harbor Blvd, Suite 300

Anaheim, CA 92805-3701

(714) 991-0800 Phone

(714) 991-0843 Fax

(714) 991-0800 TTY

Inland Empire

3130 Chicago Avenue, Suite 5 Riverside, CA 92507-3445 (951) 782-6650 Phone (951) 782-6676 Fax (951) 682-0143 TTY

San Diego

7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 107 San Diego, CA 92108-4402 (619) 767-2100 Phone (619) 767-2156 Fax (619) 767-2159 TTY

Van Nuys/Foothill

5900 Sepulveda Blvd, Suite 240 Van Nuys, CA 91411-2511 (818) 901-5024 Phone (818) 901-4316 Fax (818) 901-5086 TTY

State of California Health and Human Services Agency Department of Rehabilitation



The DOR Is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

NOTICE TO NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you are an applicant, a consumer, or a person seeking information from the DOR, you have the right to communicate with the DOR staff in your primary language.

You have the right to be treated with respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, and self-determination. You have the responsibility of fully participating and cooperating with the vocational rehabilitation process, including treating the DOR staff, its agents, and fellow participants with courtesy and consideration.

Please tell us if it is difficult for you to understand or to speak English and we will get help to communicate in your language.

If you want to report or complain about a language barrier with the DOR staff, please ask to speak with the Rehabilitation Supervisor in your local office to resolve the language barrier.

Feel free to take notes in this book and store any useful information that will help you in attaining your goal.

Notes:

Make the Commitment, Show Up, Communicate, and Follow Through





Edmund G. Brown Jr. Governor

State of California

Diana S. Dooley Secretary California Health and Human Services Agency

Anthony "Tony" P. Sauer, EMMDS Director Department of Rehabilitation

This publication can be made available in Braille, large print, computer disk, and cassette tape. Requests should be made to:

Department of Rehabilitation Office of External Affairs (916) 558-5874 Phone (916) 558-5807 TTY externalaffairs@dor.ca.gov www.dor.ca.gov

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